

RECITATIVE STUDY TECHNIQUES: THE SCORE

1. **Circle the rests that correspond with the versi sciolti line endings.** Mark where the composer “read across a line ending”. You want to be able to continue to see your poetic form in the score.
2. **Put a line under any long syllable** you might be tempted to forget, under all of them if you are new to recitative singing or Italian is not your strong suit. This is particularly important when you see a note value notated that might throw you off course. Remember you are trying NOT to see the flags unless they show you specific information – and then they tend to show the natural scanning of the poem in any case.
3. **Transfer any diction notes** you might have made in your libretto including phrasal doubling. Indicate double consonants you tend to forget and draw a line through the single ones you might be tempted to double.
4. If it is an accompagnato **plan where you need to “conduct”** the orchestra with your penultimate long syllable.
5. If you are a pianist or conductor **notate conventions like final short quarters** and articulations that do not come naturally to you yet. Indicate all the places you can give the voice freedom by placing the chord/s or **starting the melodic interjection after the voice finishes.**
6. **Mark all places that require an appoggiatura** based on where you decided to punctuate when you spoke the libretto. Note places where the composer might be prompting you to change your mind because of chord placement/harmonic progress. Indicate places where **you want to continue across a rest.**
7. **Speak your recitative** while looking at the score. **Mark any mid-line (not obligatory) appoggiaturas** that might jump out at you. You might find more (or decide to take some out) when you sing. Pay special attention to the **pacing of your rhyming couplet** at the end of your recitative.
8. **Play the chords on the piano while speaking** the recitative. Pay attention to **dynamic markings in the orchestra** if it is an accompagnato. If there are places without dynamic markings make sure to deliver your line in a way that inspires the orchestra to choose a suitable dynamic.
9. **Sing the recitative while playing the chords.** Sing it just the way you speak it – with all the nuance you developed in your libretto steps. Try not to plunk out the notes of the recitative itself. They are easy! If the poem falls out of your mouth easily you’ll be able to sight read it even if you are not a good sight reader. Trust me: it only goes so many ways! NEVER singing your recitative (or anything else for that matter) without expression is a good goal to strive for.

YOU DID IT!